1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

CHAPTER XIII

GONG-RAISING

ERECTION AND CONSECRATION OF THE GONGS

THE last few chapters have dealt in broad lines with the general principles and recurrent features of the Maki, so that in the description which now follows of this fifteen to twenty years' rite these can be referred to quite briefly and will not unnecessarily obscure with too much detail the chronological sequence of events.

Gong-Raising an essential part of the Maki on Vao.

As has already been pointed out, the erection of a new set of gongs is in many parts of Malekula carried out at any time, and is not necessarily connected with the performances of the public graded society. In the Small Islands, however, where the Maki is organised on communal lines, the two rites are very closely connected, and on Vao the connexion is so intimate that Gong-Raising has become an integral part of the Maki. Thus, when beginning his account of Maki ritual, my informant started without further comment to give a description of the Gong-Raising rites. Further enquiry confirmed the correctness of the assumption underlying this attitude, for it appeared that in this island Gong-Raising cannot take place apart from the Maki, that it is an essential preliminary to each new performance of it, and that once a new set of gongs has been set up and the Gong-Raising rites have been performed, it is necessary that no further delay should arise in the prosecution of Low Maki.

Once thus set up and followed by Low Maki, the same set of gongs should by rights last throughout High Maki as well, but if so long an interval has elapsed between the end of Low Maki and the collecting of sufficient pigs and yams to start High Maki that the gongs show danger of rotting away before the complete double rite has been completed, then a new set may be made for High Maki, in which case the whole of the ritual accompanying the erection and consecration of the first set must be gone through again.

Gongs "owned" by chief Maki-men. New gongs therefore essential for each new performance.

The same set may never, however, be used for two performances of the double rite, for the gongs so erected are the property of that "line" of

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
OO12 Malekula OO12

Maki-men that is performing the rite, and more particularly of the chief sacrificers of this "line" whose boars will be slain on the stone-platform. In accordance with the general principles governing the Maki, the members of this "line" will not themselves do any of the work connected with the making, transport or erection of the gongs. This work will be accomplished by the members of the introducing "line" in the home-villages, assisted at times by members of the other Vao villages, the part played by the Maki-men being confined to providing all the pigs and other food for the accompanying feasts, and dancing and singing songs from the appropriate song-and-dance cycles for the encouragement and pleasure of the workers, and for their own honour and glory.

Composition of gong-orchestra on Vao. Names of the gongs.

Before giving an account of the rites it is necessary to add to the general description given on pp. 311-12 a more detailed description of them as they are arranged and constructed on Vao. The general word for gong on this island is *na-mbe*, and the gong-orchestra consists of—

(*a*) *Upright gongs*, with human face carved above the slit and beaten with a single stick:
- (i) The mother-gong, called *tinan*, meaning simply "mother." This is the largest.
- (ii) A slightly smaller upright gong, called *tarine*.
- (iii) Another slightly smaller one called *gheluvghe*.
- (iv) If a sufficient number of men are available to work and pigs to be killed, a fourth kind of upright gong is set up, called *pētūr*. It is considered to be of the same calibre as the *tarine*. [This may be an innovation from Atchin, as one of the Atchin upright gongs is called *pwetur*.]

(*b*) *Horizontal gongs*, uncarved, and beaten with two sticks:
- (i) A large horizontal gong called *ru-rurghen*.
- (ii) A number of small portable horizontal gonglets called *sarune*.

In all cases, the sticks for beating the gongs are called *masan*.

Construction of upright slit gong.

Each upright gong is made out of the trunk of a large forest tree, usually of the kind called *mes-mes*.[1] Each of the larger gongs has on its upper end a pierced projection, called *pilōn*, meaning "bald," through which a rope is passed when it is dragged to the shore of the mainland, where it has been felled, and later from the Vao beach to the dancing-ground where it is to be set up. On the lower end is an undercut projection, called *laghen*, which, when the gong is set up, is inserted into the ground. The gong is hollowed out by experts (see p. 355), by means of

[1] Godefroy, I, 1933, p. 38, says that gongs may also be made of trees which he calls "tamanou," "faux teck" (false teak) and "cohu," called by the natives *na-tor*(*a*).

L:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942 0012 Malekula 0012

craft is steered by means of a long paddle (Fig. 55) held by the steersman on the port side to counteract the dragging effect of the outrigger float.

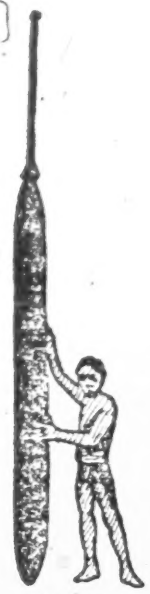

FIG. 55
Steering-paddle of a sea-going canoe (*nu-wak wala*).

Navigation by night.

Sea-going canoes furnished with sails were capable of long voyages by night as well as by day, navigation by night being assisted by considerable knowledge of the apparent movement of the stars. An account of a night voyage undertaken by the author with the natives of Atchin, together with some of the natives' astronomical observations, will be given in a later volume.

Canoes named after trees used in their construction.

Sea-going canoes may be made from the trunks of various trees, those I recorded being *tawò*, *nev*, *bagure* and *na-tor*.

Each individual canoe is named. The following list of canoe names in the order in which they were constructed shows that it is to the trees from which they were made that the name chiefly refers. These names are:

Vile	*Tawò borav(u)*
Tawò iwagh	*Tawò veturah*
Na-tor	*Vile*
Vile	*Na-tor*
Tawò mel	

Vile is presumably another tree from which canoes are made.[1]

Ownership.

If, when a sea-going canoe is to be made, a Maki is in progress, the canoe then belongs exclusively to the officiating "line" of Maki-men, that is to say, to the officiating matrilineal moiety within the double-village.[2] In this case, it will be the members of the introducing "line"

[1] Compare p. 79 for two Raga canoes made respectively from trees called *pēgo* (bread-fruit tree) and *nev*. A similar practice of naming canoes after the trees used in their construction is recorded also by Rivers (1, vol. I, p. 171) from Mota and Merlav. One of the trees so used is *tora*, corresponding to the Vao *na-tor*.

On the adoption of whalers in place of sea-going canoes this type of naming after trees could not be continued. Names given by the natives to their whalers, as recorded by Godefroy, are "New Year" (pronounced *niouyet*), the boat having been bought close to New Year's Day, "Comet," after Halley's comet which was clearly visible in the islands, "Queen," and "Saint-Michel."

[2] Compare Rivers's statement (1, vol. I, 209) that in North Raga "canoes are in no case individual property even now, but belong always to the *verana* as a whole," the *verana* being described as 'the subdivision of the [matrilineal] moiety the exact nature of which is uncertain,' but here appears to correspond with the Vao 'line.' In the same way, in Mota and Merlav the members of a crew are confined to a single matrilineal moiety (Rivers, 1, vol. I, p. 172).

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
OO12 Malekula OO12

that do the work. If, on the other hand, there is no Maki in progress, then both "lines" own it and do the work. 422

Though the cahoe belongs to the whole "line," or, if both "lines" combine, to the whole village, one man is spoken of as the "owner." It is he who performs the main sacrifices and directs operations, and it is with his personality that, after the consecration rite, the canoe itself becomes identified. This man, when the canoe is owned by one "line," is probably the leader of the Maki.

BELIEFS AND RITUAL CONNECTED WITH THE MANUFACTURE AND CONSECRATION OF SEA-GOING CANOES

First made by Ta-ghar on Oba.

Sea-going canoes are said to have been first made by Ta-ghar on Oba, whence the Small Islanders derived the art of making them. The following song refers to what is said to have been the first of such canoes. I did not record the tune. The words, as usual in songs, are archaic. The free rendering was given by a native. 113 539

Wolo ro angk-e,
Om sin togo le leure.
Osongani nu-wak e walau;
Agos bane savega?
Go wolo-wolo angk.
Anggambasi wolo nggere-nggeres; [1]
Vavine geru rom turu.
Wolo ro angk,
Om sin togo le leure.

"Run, run, canoe (before the wind),
Let it not hug the shore.
Keep it up towards the south;
At what place shall we land
The canoe is running.
He pretends to launch the canoe
Two women are waiting (at the landing-place)
Run, run, canoe,
Let it not hug the shore."

The sea-going nature of the canoe is here well emphasised, and reference to a southward course is interesting, though whether this is to the course from Oba or from still further north I cannot say. Some story lies behind the song, for which I have no key.

[1] Modern Atchin *kar-karas, karas,* "to trick."